

# Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

This publication was produced in 2000 as  
a joint project of:

Wisconsin Department of Natural  
Resources - Division of Forestry and the  
Bureau of Endangered Resources,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
The Nature Conservancy,  
International Paper,  
Stora Enso and  
Plum Creek.

For more information, contact

[Eunice.Padley@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Eunice.Padley@dnr.state.wi.us)

and reference publication number FR-174



# WESTERN JACOB'S LADDER

(*Polemonium occidentale* var. *lacustre*)

**Federal Status:** Not Listed

**State Status:** Endangered

## **Description:**

The leaves of western Jacob's ladder arise both from the base of the plant and from the flower stems; they are compound, made up of 9 to 13 paired, slender leaflets. Each leaflet is about 1 inch long, while the whole leaf



(stem plus leaflets) may be 6 inches long and 2 inches wide. The entire plant is slightly more than 2 feet tall. The five-petaled blossoms of western Jacob's ladder appear in late June to early July. Each flower is about 1/2 inch in diameter, a bright violet-blue fading to white in



the interior. The flowers occur in spreading clusters. The underground part of western Jacob's ladder has a slender, horizontal, creeping rootstock, quite different from the common Jacob's ladder.

**Habitat:** Wet, open sites amidst black spruce, white cedar and tamarack are good habitat for western Jacob's ladder. Labrador tea, bead lily, swamp saxifrage and wild calla are also good indicators of suitable habitat.

**Forestry Considerations:** Where western Jacob's ladder occurs, it would be advisable to maintain the openings that the plant prefers.

"Strip cutting" has proven to be compatible with western Jacob's ladder. Tree harvest should occur only when the ground is solidly frozen. The ground water levels should not be altered.

